

they are closest to and deal with the issues that are there. This action, of course, is contrary to the system of circuit courts, judges thousands of miles away from disputes involving certain impacted areas. Those lawsuits should be tried in the courts of primary jurisdiction because they are the courts that are there.

We have had a real problem in Yellowstone National Park. The district court judge here in Washington decided to move back again on something that we thought was resolved. The Park Service had asked for relief from Judge Sullivan's December order because it would have left an impossible decision. It then moved back to a Wyoming court where it belonged, a Federal circuit court, of course. So now we find ourselves with 2 years of indecisiveness which means we have not made a decision. People don't know whether they can go into Yellowstone Park in the winter.

I have introduced legislation that would limit the ability of individuals to venue shop. Federal land issues arising in a particular State ought to go to that circuit court in which the Federal judges there are involved. These Federal judges have the same qualifications as anywhere else, and that is what Federal courts are for. That is why we have different venues. So it is important. Access to public lands is very important to our State and certainly we need to exercise the system that has been set up.

The Federal judiciary is a system of circuits. Wyoming is in the Tenth Circuit. Unfortunately, this system now allows people to go around the Tenth Circuit and go to another place where they think they will have better success.

My friend from Montana is here. I hope and I am pushing for a bill that says you ought to go to the circuit in which the problem arises for the Federal court jurisdiction.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

A ROCKY START

Mr. BURNS. Madam President, we all came back from our States after the Fourth of July break knowing that we would be working on a short timeline. Lots of legislation and policy has to be done before we end this Congress and all go home and campaign for election and reelection. We are off to kind of a rocky start. Not only do we not have a budget and the rules that we must abide by within a budget in order to proceed to appropriations and to make any sense out of the appropriations process, but we also do not have our appropriations process as being sort of supplanted, that we may have to take another tack in order to pass them and keep the Nation's Government in business.

This week, we have witnessed that we are not really ready to pass any leg-

islation in this body. We, as 100 Senators, are concentrating on votes and issues that lean to doing the business of a political party rather than doing the people's business, which we were sent here to do. This is the people's forum. All people in this country expect us to get our work done. We have issues that are held up, yes, in policy, but the business of financing this Government in a direction that faces the challenges that we do at this time is also being held up.

I am sorry we could not move on to the class action legislation. It was not the intent of this Senate to do that, as objections were thrown out that blocked the legislation no matter what the conditions were, let alone amendments—no agreement on them or a timeframe in which to finish the legislation.

This is important for small business. Class action is important for a State such as mine, because we are a State of small businesses. We don't have any large corporations in the State of Montana. Lawsuits—and frivolous lawsuits—are just sapping the life out of the people who perform the services and deliver the goods for the rest of the citizenry in the State of Montana. That is not being allowed to move forward. Under any condition, there is an objection. Are we heading toward the small end of the tunnel whenever we get down to the end of the session, and then everything breaks loose—issues, bills, and articles are moved much faster. Sometimes they move so fast there are some unintended consequences.

I am disappointed that we don't finish our business. This is the people's house. Issues are on the line. We are just wasting our time. In fact, we are doing it to the point where we might as well be home, working at home, and whenever we decide we want to do business, then we will come back to town and complete the Nation's work.

It is incumbent upon all of us who share the same responsibility, not only to our States but to this country, to complete the work at hand, providing economic opportunities for more people, which we have done.

Look at the statistics. More people own homes now in the United States than ever before in the history of this country, and the same is true about Montana. More people are working today than any other time in Montana history. We gained jobs in the last 4 years, when the rest of the country was struggling. We want to keep that trend going, expanding. Yet we are held up here on issues that are very important in order to make sure that the expansion continues.

I appeal to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. It is time to move from the frivolous discourse that we have heard in the last couple of weeks and this week, and get on with the business at hand and vote. Let the will of the American people be heard and done. It is our responsibility. It falls on each and every one of our shoulders,

and if we are part of an obstructionist move, we must reassess our position and understand what is at stake.

I appeal to my colleagues. It is time.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

Mr. HARKIN. Is this Senator allotted a certain amount of time?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Fifteen minutes.

CIA AGENT REVEALED

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, yesterday I stood before the Senate and noted that it had been almost a full year since the identity of a covert CIA agent was revealed in print by the columnist Robert Novak. It has been 360 days and counting. Next Wednesday, it will be 1 full year. It is time to ask, Why hasn't the White House cleared this up?

Madam President, 360 days have gone by since a CIA agent's name was revealed by top White House officials. We know how agent Valerie Plame's coverage was blown. Back in September, the Washington Post reported that two senior White House officials called at least six Washington journalists and disclosed the identity of a covert CIA agent.

It has also become fairly clear why the agent's cover was blown. It was part of an ongoing effort to discredit and retaliate against critics of this administration, especially those who revealed that intelligence used to justify the war in Iraq was flawed or fabricated. Now Ms. Plame, as we know now, is married to former Ambassador Joseph Wilson. Ambassador Wilson was sent on a factfinding mission to Niger to examine claims that Saddam Hussein had sought to purchase uranium from that nation. He found no evidence to support the claim. But President Bush, nonetheless, made that claim in his State of the Union Address.

How those famous 16 words read by the President to the listening Nation about the efforts by Saddam Hussein to purchase uranium from Niger made it into the State of the Union Address remains a great literary mystery. Who lied in President Bush's State of the Union speech? We still don't know. We do know that Ambassador Wilson published an article disputing the uranium claim in the New York Times. Apparently to discredit and punish Mr. Wilson, senior White House officials leaked the identity of Wilson's wife and the fact that she was a CIA operative.

One day Ms. Plame was a valued human intelligence asset; the next day she was political cannon fodder. What we still don't know almost 1 year later is who the senior White House officials responsible for this destructive leak were. We still don't know who it was that gave this classified information to the White House, to the leakers. Was it someone at the NSC? Was it someone at the CIA? Was it the same person who made the decision to include the